

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17-19 and 21-24 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3-5, 8, 10-12, 15 and 17-19 are amended, claims 2, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 20 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and claims 22-24 are added. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4-6, 11-13 and 18-20. By this Amendment, claims 6, 13 and 20 are canceled, and features of canceled claims 6, 13 and 20 are incorporated into claims 5, 12 and 19. Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19 are not rewritten in independent form at this time because their base claims are believed to be allowable for reasons discussed below.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 7-10, 14-17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,945,458 to Shah et al. (Shah). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate features of canceled claims 2 and 6. Therefore, claim 1 recites that the evaluation unit, based on the content data for the information that has been stored for a group to be evaluated, extracts an attribute for the group to be evaluated, extracts a concept for content data in information that has been propagated or received by the other groups, and employs the attribute extracted for the group to be evaluated and the concept extracted for the content data to evaluate the influence of the concept that the group to be evaluated has had on the other groups.

As described in the specification at, for example, page 10, line 14-page 15, line 19, one of the objects of the apparatus according to claim 1 is to evaluate a value for an organization by determining a focus on what kind of communication contents originating at a specific organization are used by another organization and in what range or scale (page 13, lines 1-5).

Shah, on the other hand, relates to computerized systems or networks interconnecting automated mail systems used in postal computing environment that process mail and mail pieces in post offices and mail processing facilities (col. 1, lines 14-17) and evaluates route information for paper mail. Shah does not relate to evaluation of a value for an organization based on electrically propagated messages and therefore is not analogous to the claimed invention.

Moreover, Shah does not teach or suggest employing an attribute extracted for the group to be evaluated and a concept extracted for the content data to evaluate the influence of the concept that the group to be evaluated has had on the other groups as claimed.

Accordingly, claim 1 is patentably distinct from the applied prior art.

Method claim 8 and program claim 15 each similarly recite evaluating the influence of the concept that the group to be evaluated has had on the other groups based on the attribute extracted for the group to be evaluated and the concept extracted for the content data. Similar to the above discussion with respect to claim 1, claims 8 and 15 are patentably distinct from the applied art.

Claims 3, 10 and 17 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

At least for these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The rejection of claims 7, 14 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is improper because the Patent Office relies on a secondary reference to Nolan. Thus, Applicants believe that claims 7, 14 and 21 were intended to be rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Shah in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0037116 to Nolan et al. (Nolan). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nolan relates to analyzing e-mail traffic, but only copies header and attachment portions "without reviewing the actual content of each individual e-mail" (Abstract).

Therefore, Nolan is not analogous to Shah or the claimed invention. In addition, Nolan does not overcome the deficiencies of Shah with respect to independent claims 1, 8 and 15.

Accordingly, claims 7, 14 and 21 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

New claims 22-24 recite that the concept is a common word, which frequently appears in the one group. None of the applied art teaches or suggests this feature. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 22-24 are patentably distinct from the applied art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17-19 and 21-24 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Request for Continued Examination

Date: December 29, 2005

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